Feast Keeping Opposition and the Current Crisis

Randy Peterson

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This booklet is dedicated to YHVH,
our wondrous Creator and Redeemer.

To Him be all praise, honor, and glory
for His matchless Love, Life, and Care!

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Introduction

This book is written for the fair and open minded individual who is not afraid to investigate the facts before determining one's belief on a subject. There seems to be an ever increasing number of believers who are willing to accept what they are told without studying things out for themselves. While this may not be critical concerning many earthly considerations, it is of vital importance when it comes to spiritual beliefs.

One of the topics under heated debate these days is the Feasts of YHVH* (The LORD). The disagreements that arise concerning these festivals are really symptoms of a much deeper division of thought over the nature of God's law. This division is fostered, for the most part, by denominated religion. There are always those who desire to control others and always those that are willing to be controlled. Whether the controlled are deceived by the charisma or position of the controller, or just intellectually lazy, the results are the same; the minds of the people are directed away from the Divine Teacher who desires to be intimately involved with those who choose to follow Him.

In this book we will look at truths long obscured by human reasoning which uphold God's law and, therefore, His divinely appointed festivals. We will focus on clear links which connect the New Covenant with the foundation principles of YHVH's kingdom and plan of salvation, and how that links to the misperception of which is insidiously precipitating a tragic crisis. We will expose sinister tactics the father of lies is employing through, perhaps, well meaning and unsuspecting souls; tactics aimed at effacing the righteousness of God in His people by making His laws of none effect. We will look, too, at Scriptural guidelines for how we are to learn and whom we should believe as we each establish our personal system of belief and practice.

This book is humbly offered with the prayer that each individual will arrive at the Truth as it is in Jesus for a deeper relationship with Him, for the advancement of His kingdom, and the praise and honor of His name.

Note: *Italicized* words in Scripture denote words supplied by the translators; *italics* used elsewhere in this booklet are for emphasis.

All Scripture quotes are from the *King James Version* unless otherwise noted.

R.P.

*YHVH is the English equivalent to the Hebrew Tetragrammaton by which our Creator identified Himself to the Hebrews throughout the Old Testament scriptures. King James' translators replaced it with the title "LORD" in keeping with the like practice used by the rabbinic Jews so as not to overuse the Sacred Name.

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Chapter One

The Basis of the Current Crisis

There are Bible scholars in the church today who speak out against the biblical Feasts of YHVH. One of them has used the title "Feast Keeping and the Final Crisis" in sharing his findings and beliefs to the church. Regardless of what this scholar understands the final crisis to be, there is a very serious crisis upon us right now. This crisis has several issues at its core that, from all appearances, have been largely lost sight of today. Not understanding these issues is more dangerous than one's particular view on the feasts, because it affects the individual's basic belief system and determines which side he or she will take in the final crisis looming on the horizon.

The issues of the current crisis are all relevant to corresponding aspects of the New Covenant that God promised to make with Israel, which Christ ratified by shedding His blood on Calvary. Even though we are living approximately two thousand years after the death of our Savior, it has become quite clear that many Christians who claim to be New Covenant believers are actually living under an Old Covenant mindset. Let's begin then with the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the New Covenant. In this chapter we will make a quick overview of these basic aspects, going into more depth in later chapters.

Who's WHO in the New Covenant?

> "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah: 31, 33).

Here the who's who is firmly established. YHVH is God, and Israel (all who accept Jesus, the Israel promised to come) are His people. I don't know of any Christians that would not want to be included in this promise, do you? I don't think it would be incorrect to say that most Christians and Gentile Messianic believers understand themselves to be spiritual Israelites or Jews, even though they don't have a drop of Jewish blood in them. The two most important things to understand in the "who's who" question is: number one - only God can do what He can do, such as transform hopeless sinners into triumphant saints, and number two - our part is to trust and obey Him.

What's WHAT in the New Covenant?

> "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts . . . for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the L LORD . . ." (Jeremiah 31:33, 34).

In these verses we can clearly see God's objective in the covenant process. He wants us to *know* Him! To know Him we must know not only who He is but what He is like. That is where His law comes in. You could say that His law is a written description of His character as it applies to man; and here He promises to write His law on our hearts (minds) so that we will understand what He is about, thereby coming to know Him. Most believers should understand that this process is accomplished by the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was poured out upon the early church on Pentecost (the anniversary date of YHVH's giving His law from Sinai) some fifty days after Jesus ratified the New Covenant with His blood. To understand God's character, as expressed in His law by the *indwelling* of His Spirit, is to understand who He is and to spiritually *know* Him in the biblical sense (Genesis 4:1)! From this view it is easy to see how imperative it is that we have the full measure of His Spirit in our lives. Or, we could say, the full essence of His law/character - with nothing added and nothing removed (Deuteronomy 4:2; Leviticus 27:34).

When's WHEN in the New Covenant?

Here we will go to the book of Ezekiel. In chapter 36, we find what could be called an "amplified version" of the New Covenant promises. Verses 24 and 25 indicate "when" in that Israel's return to the land that He had given them would precede the fulfillment of the remainder of the promises. This return happened after the seventy years of Babylonian captivity. The seventy-week prophecy of Daniel nine indicates that the New Covenant would not be established immediately upon their return to the land, but rather, it would be ratified in the midst of the seventieth week of years.

> "Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: . . . And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off but not for himself . . . And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease . . ." (Daniel 9:25-27).

Another reference to "when" can be seen in Jesus' words spoken to the Samaritan woman: "But the hour cometh, and now is . . ." (John 4:23). (Note: We will look closer at this verse under "WHERE.") Even though His covenant blood had not yet been shed, the Lamb of God was in their midst; and they could begin to learn and practice worshiping the Father in Spirit and in

Truth. We are certainly living in the "now" of the New Covenant today! Indeed, ". . . now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

Where's WHERE in the New Covenant?

There is no doubt that Jerusalem was Israel's religious center when the New Covenant was ratified. Jeremiah 31:38-40 speaks of the restoration of the city of Jerusalem but, as with the "when," we find more on the "where" in Ezekiel 36. In the verses preceding the promises, God makes reference to "their own land" in verse 17, "(H)is land" in verse 20, and (addressing Israel) "your own land" in verse 24. This last reference indicates where Israel would be when He would re-established His covenant with them.

Are we to conclude then that Jerusalem is all important concerning the "where" in the covenant promises? The answer could be stated as a yes and no. Jesus made a very important transitional statement while talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, recorded in John 4:5 and onward. In verse 20, the woman asked Him concerning the "where" of worship. She perceived him to be a prophet (vs. 19), so she wanted to know where He would say they were to worship; was it Mount Gerizim, the worship center of the Samaritans, or Jerusalem the Jewish place of worship? Jesus' answer to her aids our understanding of the nature of our covenant relationship with Him today. A truly "new" way of relating to God was dawning upon Israel's understanding at that time. A spiritual reality was to replace their physical misconceptions. Their religion of flesh was to pass away, superseded in every respect by the workings of the Holy Spirit for, in, and through them by faith. In like manner, the physical "where" would change to the spiritual as well. See if you can perceive the "where' in Verses 23 and 24:

> "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24).

Does not the word "in" speak to the topic of where? No doubt the woman was expecting Jesus to say, "They that worship God are to worship Him in Jerusalem," as she knew He was a Jew; but, His answer directed her gaze to spiritual things. Hebrews chapter 12 speaks of the "where," starting with verse 18:

> 18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,
>
> 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:
21 And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)
22 But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,
24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that* of Abel.
25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven . . .
28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:
29 For our God is a consuming fire.

In understanding the New Covenant, it is imperative that we not miss Jesus' switch from the tangible to the intangible, from the physical to the spiritual. The New Covenant standard is the character/righteousness of YHVH. His matchless righteousness was only briefly outlined in the Ten Commandments and the rest of the law recorded by Moses. This can be seen by Jesus' fulfilling, or filling up, the definition of the law in spiritual terms as recorded in Matthew 5:17-48. Paul reiterates this lack of completeness, inherent in the written law, in his physical vs. spiritual comparison of the covenants in II Corinthians 3:

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.
7 But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away:
8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?
9 For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.
10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.
11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is *glorious*.

Attempting to attain YHVH's standard of righteousness by works of the flesh is as futile as attempting to travel to the heavenly Jerusalem by our physical means of transportation.

Because WHY in the New Covenant?

The "why" is closely associated with the "what," which we have already discussed. We can pretty much plug the answers of the "what" into the "why," and they fit as reasons for God's covenanting with us. There is an additional reason brought out in Ezekiel 36, however, that we have not addressed. YHVH spells it out in the following verses:

> 16 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
> 17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.
> 18 Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols *wherewith* they had polluted it:
> 19 And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.
> 20 And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.
> 21 But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went.
> 22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the LORD GOD; I do not *this* for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.
> 23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, saith the LORD GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

Now we are getting down to the underlying problem God has with His people! By disobedience, those that call themselves by God's name, profane or defile His name or reputation. When we say we are God's people and then go about doing *our own thing* in direct opposition to the express commands of God, we grossly misrepresent His character before the world. So what are God's options? He could just wipe us completely off the map and start over, couldn't He? That solution would be the easiest if He were not LOVE PERSONIFIED. Or, He could just say, "That's all right, I love you more than I love my righteousness. I'll just wipe out the principles upon which my kingdom is established and by which it runs and let my fallen creation (over which satan is chief) run the show." Who among us that have lived any time at all on this sinwrecked planet think either of these options sounds good? Isn't it because of His love, His wondrous balance of mercy and justice, that He has implemented His Divinely

ingenious plan of salvation? This humanly inexplicable LOVE makes us a deal, that if we are anything but a fool, we cannot turn down! Think about it! YHVH, I repeat, YHVH - The Eternal One, who created and maintains all that exists, loves us so much that He took upon Himself the punishment for our rebellion and then promised to imbue us with His very own righteousness so that we can live with Him for eternity! If we say "no" to such an outrageously extravagant offer, to not exist at all must sound pretty good!

So again, *why* does YHVH offer us the New Covenant? Hopefully we understand that, first of all, He loves us with a love that is far greater than we could ever imagine; and secondly, His kingdom could not exist under our (Satan's) rules but only by the purity of His own name/ character/principles/law/love. Is there a better answer than "Father Knows Best!"?

HOW Does the New Covenant Work?

The answer to this question is so simple a child can easily understand it, yet many adult believers have a difficult time trying to figure it out! Perhaps they believe that the old maxim, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!" applies to God as well. A careful reading of Ezekiel 36:23-38 should correct that notion. Please turn to this passage right now and count how many times YHVH used the words "I" and "will" together, then read it through again and count how many times we are commanded to do something. Now, having done that, what did you find? If you are using the King James version, you should have counted at least sixteen "I will" or "will I" statements which indicate actions on God's part, plus a few other "I" statements as well. What then did you find is commanded of us? Isn't it amazing that not one command is given! And those things that sort of sound like something we are to do, are actually His working in and through us. Let there be no mistake about it; if we agree to His covenant, we *will* loathe ourselves when we remember our evil ways (vs.31). We *will* ask Him to do it for us (vs. 37) when we realize we are powerless without Him. Oh, yes. We don't want to leave out how we *will* walk in His statutes and keep and do His judgments by the causative action of His Spirit within us (vs. 27)! Need any more be said on the "how?"

Concluding Chapter One

We would do well to consider the fact that God made ministration and application changes in His covenant when the transfer from old to new was made. In addition, the wording of His New Covenant promises made His ground rules abundantly clear. He was not going to enter into any more covenants with mankind that were dependent upon man's promises to do anything! We either accept His promises under His terms or we reject them. God knew from the beginning, that man, of himself, could not begin to live up to the principles of His kingdom; so, He let Israel of old demonstrate that fact so that those who would live in the time of the new Israel under Jesus' New Covenant would not have to make the same mistake! It needs to

be noted, too, that even though changes were made in ministration and application, none of the principles of God's law were *abolished*. For this we can rejoice because YHVH is GOOD and changes not!

Chapter Two

The Crisis!

You may be thinking, Okay, we have reviewed the New Covenant promises; but what does that have to do with feast keeping and some current crisis? If you really want to know, then hang on and keep reading.

First, let's pause for a word of prayer and ask our Father in Heaven to grant us the grace we need to take His rebuke and submit to His correction in our lives.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Please show us where we have failed you. You have told us in your Word that we can't know the depth of evil in our own hearts. You have also told us that Your thoughts and Your ways are as high above us as the heavens are higher than the earth. Please forgive our sins through the blood of Jesus and put Your true humility in us by Your indwelling Spirit. May we see Your rebuke as the blessing it is and Your correction as the life-saving operation that it is. Work in us the obedience and submission that Jesus displayed to us as our example. We thank You and praise You for Your unmeasurable Love and Salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Crisis in the "Who"

It seems that many of YHVH's people have lost sight of who He is. In an attempt to distance themselves from picturing Him as a harsh, vengeful taskmaster they have just about dropped the words authority, righteousness, and justice from their vocabulary. Only when we realize He maintains His kingdom of love in the perfect balance of mercy and justice can we begin to appreciate *who* He truly is. Then we can understand that for Him to say, "I will be your God" is His way of saying, "I make the rules in my kingdom." In like manner, for Him to say, "And ye shall be my people" is His way of saying, "And ye shall be my subjects (or subject to me and my rules)." To recognize and proclaim His authority certainly does not paint Him as unloving! Submission to an all-loving, all-wise, all-knowing, just, and righteous Creator God is our only option if we wish to live forever in His kingdom. In fact, to find fault with His rules is to find fault with Him and begs the question of why we would want to live with Him in the first place. What does that have to do with us? Jesus plainly stated, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). To pick and choose which of His laws are acceptable to us is to question God's authority and wisdom. Lucifer tried this in Heaven and was cast out, yet there are many in the church who fail to

count the cost of clinging to the traditional belief that certain of God's laws were nailed to the cross.

To inherit a tradition is one thing; but to stubbornly hold to that tradition, after advancing light has shown it to be error, is to condemn oneself as did the Jews that delivered Jesus to be crucified. Please notice Jesus' words in Matthew 5:19, directly following the quote above:

> "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven . . ." Now, before you say, "He will be in the kingdom, just considered the least," please consider Ellen White's comment immediately after quoting this verse: "That is, he shall have no place therein." *(Thoughts From The Mount of Blessing p. 51.)* And before you stumble over the use of "commandments" in this verse, compared to "law" used in verse 18, please read Leviticus 27:34 considering its context. There we have an example of another way "commandments" is used in the *King James Version*, the version that Ellen White used.* Now, do not Jesus' words (in Matt. 5:19), along with Ellen White's commentary indicate this an issue critical enough to warrant prayerful study? Or will you gamble your eternal life by trusting tradition or human opinion?

"Whosoever . . . shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:19 That is, he shall have no place therein. For he who willfully breaks one commandment, does not, in spirit and truth, keep any of them. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10 (Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings p. 51)

*In all three of the Old Testament verses where "ten commandments" is used, the Hebrew word translated commandments is daw-bawr' (Strong's #H1697) meaning: "a word" which explains why the Jews call the ten commandments God's "Ten Words." In Lev. 27:34, the Hebrew word is mits-vaw' (H4687) which means "a command, whether human or divine (collectively the Law)." (Strong's Hebrew Dictionary)

The Crisis in the "What"

Isn't it interesting that, when the light of YHVH's love dispels the darkness by enlightening our understanding concerning what He is like, we want to submit to Him? It is not difficult to trust our Creator when we know how much He loves us. Then we are automatically

drawn to want to be like Him and with Him! Isn't the transforming preparation to become like and be with the Love of our Life what sanctification, being set apart in righteousness, is all about? But wait! Before we go merrily on our way down the path of traditional thinking and belief, we need to make sure that our understanding of God's righteousness squares with what His Word reveals!

You might ask, "Isn't it enough to have His Spirit in us?" To answer that question correctly, we need to refer back to Ezekiel 36:26, 27. Please notice how receiving a new heart and a new spirit is inseparable from YHVH's statutes and judgments with which we are caused to be brought into conformity when His Spirit lives within us!

"Well," you might reply, "that is His Ten Commandments." And you would be partially right. And that is the problem with our traditional teaching on this issue - it is only partially right! The church has failed to carefully read the Scriptures that reveal what the statutes and judgments actually are. It is much easier to rest in the interpretations that have been handed down to us than to ask the difficult questions and apply our mental energies to seek for the entire truth.

There are legitimate questions crying to be asked that spiritual lethargy can't seem to see or hear. Questions like, "Why are there just a few exceptions salvaged from the "Law of Moses" like paying tithes and offerings, eating only the Levitical clean meats, and gathering together on the Sabbath. These things are enjoined upon us by the church as a matter of course without any particular reason as to why we are to keep these while excluding others.

Seventh-day Adventists have every right to ask why this picking and choosing has taken place! Shouldn't God's "People of the Book" accept every word of God as important? Did not Jesus say, ". . .Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every** word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"? (Matthew 4:4, emphasis added.)

Fallen human nature retains those laws that support and protect the existence of man's organizations. Is it not true that if the church were to throw out the laws enjoining the assembly and tithe and offerings it would cease to exist? We must ask, "If these laws are so vital, what might the church be missing in the ones it has discarded?" Please read Malachi chapter four carefully and prayerfully and then consider the following statements by Ellen White:

> In these last days there is a call from heaven inviting you to keep the statutes and ordinances of the Lord (*Signs of the Times,* 2/3/1888).
>
> During the loud cry, . . . the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere . . . The Word declares . . . "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk

in My statutes." This is the descent of the Holy Spirit, sent from God to do its office work. (*Review and Herald,* 10/13/1904)

God will not violate our free moral status by forcing His will on us but will only do that which we ask and allow of Him. As we saw in the "How" section in chapter one, God said: ". . . I will yet *for* this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. . ." (Ezekiel 36:37). Herein lies the current crisis: We will not ask Him to accomplish for and in us any of His laws we deem as unimportant. As a result, we will miss out, as He will not do for us that for which we do not ask. James 4:2 reminds us, ". . . (Y)e have not, because ye ask not." Every one of His laws represents an aspect of His character He desires to impart to us. What part of Him do we not want?

The Crisis in the "When"

Most people understand the results of not studying and learning the subject matter, little by little, throughout an educational course. Our common sense tells us that we will fail the course if we don't learn as we go, preparing ourselves for the final test. It is no different in spiritual things! Jesus' parable of the ten virgins awaiting the bridegroom's coming emphasizes this truth. All ten virgins had the same opportunity to prepare for their part in the wedding procession, but only five made the necessary preparation. At the time of the loud cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh!" only the five that failed to prepare were faced with a crisis. That was *their final* crisis. They had passed through a prior crisis without realizing it by failing to adequately prepare for an indeterminate period of waiting. *Our final* crisis will come shortly before the second coming of Jesus if we fail *now* to make sure we receive as much of the Holy Spirit as God will impart. Returning to the classroom analogy, our final test question will be the same: "Are our lamps filled and burning?" To word it another way, "Are our hearts cleansed and filled with the Holy Spirit, the righteousness of Christ, the living definition of His law?"

The current crisis for the SDA church is easy to see from this perspective, considering the current push to direct the members away from the statutes and judgments given to Moses. The critical "when" involved in our acceptance or rejection of God's New Covenant is *NOW!*

The Crisis in the "Where"

Jesus said that we are to worship The Father in Spirit and in Truth. This is the "where" of the new covenant! He could just as well have said it this way: "They that worship the Father must worship Him in my Holy Spirit, that I will send to you, and in me," as He has said, ". . . I am the way, the **truth**, and the life . . ." You may be thinking, "Okay, where is the crisis here? Adventists believe in the Holy Spirit and in Jesus." That may be true in word but it takes more

than our words. It must be demonstrated in our actions as well! As God promised in Ezekiel 36:27, ". . .I will . . . cause you to **walk** in my statutes, and ye shall **keep** my judgments, and **do** *them*." It makes no difference what we may claim to believe if our life doesn't lend credibility to our words by conforming to the express will of God. Sorry to say, but even Adventists that throw out parts of God's law they don't think are important, subject themselves to the curses that Moses said would befall those who added to or took away from God's law. Let's look at Deuteronomy 4:

> 1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.
> 2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *aught* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.
> 3 Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.
> 4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God *are* alive every one of you this day.

The charge YHVH gave Israel included the curses for disobedience and blessings for obedience; this can be seen in Deuteronomy, chapters 26 through 28. Anyone who takes the time to read these commands and warnings will see that it is indeed serious to call oneself a spiritual Israelite and then go about one's life disregarding YHVH's word by adding to or taking away from His commands. If this isn't enough to alert you to the current crisis, then remember that the Divine Being that thundered His "Ten Words" from Sinai and spoke their application in the statutes for Moses to record, is the same one John called the *Word* who was made flesh and dwelt among us. This same *Word* said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:6 and Ezekiel 36:27, emphasis added).

The Crisis in the "Why"

There is good reason the New Covenant promises were placed as they were in Ezekiel. It immediately follows a reminder of Israel's disobedience which resulted in their dispersion from their land. They had misrepresented God to the nations throughout which they were scattered. They had profaned His name by proudly claiming to be His people though still unrepentant and disobedient. (See Ezekiel 36:16-22.) SDA's who claim to believe and keep God's Ten Commandments, yet pick and choose from His extended applications of them according to their liking, follow in the steps of Israel. To say we are God's remnant people

while not obeying His laws, especially translates to the breaking of the third commandment which forbids taking His name in vain.

If we are to respond favorably to the New Covenant, there are three things critical to our understanding:

1. The inability of man to be like God on his own.
2. God's concern for His own reputation.
3. His New Covenant solution.

If these were properly understood, there probably wouldn't be a current crisis concerning His laws. God may have winked at Israel's ignorance ". . . but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30, 31). Considering what we know, as well as what we have had opportunity to know, we dare not expect God to wink at our willful ignorance and disobedience!

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The heart of the crisis in the "why" lies in rejecting or refusing what YHVH has stated that He will cause us to "keep" and "do" (Ezekiel 36:27), in order to sanctify His name (Reputation, see Strong's H8034), in us before the eyes of the heathen. (See Ezekiel 36:23.) If we throw out even one command of God and therefore fail to ask Him to work in us to obey it, we block His working in us. In so doing, we reject the New Covenant which is our only hope of being a part of the church/bride of Christ. In effect, we say "No!" to Jesus' marriage proposal.

The Crisis in the "How"

Perhaps the greatest reason many today seek to avoid feast keeping is found in man's tragic misunderstanding of how we are to attain to YHVH's standard of righteousness. Seeing Israel's obvious inability to keep God's laws, they assume that God surely doesn't demand the same from us who live on this side of the cross. This assumption comes from a misunderstanding of the difference between the Old and New Covenants. Israel's answer, "All the words which the LORD hath said will we do," (Exodus 24:3), while showing good intentions, also showed they did not understand that they could not be like God on their own. For us to

throw out any of God's laws, can indicate we do not understand His promises to perform His standard of righteousness in and for us.

This misunderstanding reveals itself in the words spoken by those still influenced by the traditions and teachings of men. This was illustrated to me while at church one Sabbath morning. I was speaking to the new young pastor about God's feasts. His wife, having overheard my talking about the relevancy of the feasts, innocently exclaimed, "Oh Randy, don't you know? We don't have to keep those anymore!" I thank God that I could answer her, "Have to? We get to!" This dear couple had evidently been taught the misconception that the "Laws of Moses" were Old Covenant laws, tied to works of the flesh, and no longer necessary under the New Covenant and grace. Even though the topic of righteousness by faith was a passion of this pastor and probably of his wife as well, evidently, they had not yet come to understand the full beauty and power offered to us in the New Covenant promises.

It has been satan's consistent goal to keep mankind in darkness concerning God's covenant provisions. He knows that therein lies his defeat in his battle to hold mankind captive to sin. One of his most powerful weapons is the lie that God is waiting for us to keep his law by our own works. After exhausting us with guilt over our failure to attain to God's Ten Commandments, he whispers, "Aren't you glad that Jesus nailed all those other laws to the cross?" It is only natural, at that point, that we would fear even the suggestion that God expects us to master seemingly countless other laws as well!

YHVH desires to shine the gospel of His glorious grace into our souls, dispelling the darkness and gloom of satan's lies; but He waits for us to open the doors and windows of our heart to Him. When we do that, He comes in and enlightens our minds to the truth of His covenant offer. This light takes away our fear of additional laws to keep, by thoroughly convincing us that He will work in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

Chapter Three

Crisis Precursors

There are some problems that need to be addressed before we go any further. They are centered in our misunderstanding of how we are to individually relate to God. If not dealt with first, these problems will distract us from realizing our lack of daily spiritual preparation which will ultimately result in our failing the final exam.

These problems are closely related and work in concert with each other. Because they stand in direct opposition to the Word of God, we can know that they have a common source in the great deceiver. We will look at each of them now, under their subheadings.

Inverted Educational Structure

As we have seen in Jeremiah 31:34, it is YHVH's stated purpose to establish direct, individual teacher-student relationships with His children. This relational structure can also be seen in Genesis 17:7, where God told Abram:

> "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."

Satan hates this one-to-one relationship structure, because he cannot control and ultimately destroy an individual who chooses to maintain this connection with God. From Eden to our time, he has used every means possible to block and sever this union which is the foundation of God's New Covenant with His people.

Fallen man misconstrues God's purpose in covenanting with His children. This is the result of satan programming man's default thinking so as to view things opposite of how God views them. When God makes a unilateral covenant with His people, they think of it as bilateral. When He makes a personal covenant, man thinks of it as corporate. When God says "dark", man hears "light", and visa-versa. Little wonder we are in the sad condition we are!

As if our default thinking wasn't bad enough, satan has a library full of alternate twists and turns that he has thrown in at no extra charge. One of those ploys involves the idea that man can disregard, at will, any part of God's covenant conditions with impunity. This lie is an extension of the illusive lie the serpent told Eve in Eden; the suggestion that she was already equal to her Creator, and all she had to do to realize it was to eat of the forbidden tree.

Through his programing, satan's illusion has become our delusion. In our innate rebelliousness against God, we shamelessly assert ourselves as having the right to usurp the Holy Spirit's position as teacher in spiritual matters. This insidious character trait has led to the hierarchical structures prevalent in Christian denominations today, just as in all the other religions under satan's control.

As with any scientific discipline, the science of mental domination becomes more sophisticated with time. The success of the Protestant Reformation taught the Papacy that they had to be more subtle in propagating their dogmas if they were to maintain their control over the people. The Protestants were experiencing great success by educating the common people in the simple Bible truth of direct access to Divinity by faith in Christ; so the Papal educational system, which appeals to fallen flesh, was devised to counteract that success. Since then the Papal educational model, with its honors and degrees, has taken over the world. This model is built upon the hierarchical format which, in turn, depends on the educational system to build and broaden its support base.

The bestowing of academic degrees ensures that the dogma of the hierarchical leadership is going to be perpetuated, guaranteeing control of the religious beliefs of the populace who support the system. Those who persevere through the indoctrination process and climb up the degree ladder are awarded letters of attainment which, in turn, bring prestige and positions of trust. This trust is what enables those thus honored to assert themselves as teachers of the common and unlearned. With much "pomp and circumstance," those at the top of the hierarchy award their tokens of trust to the graduates. Intended or not, this promotes reverence for those being honored in the minds of the unlettered.

It is sad, but all of the protestant churches have adopted the Papal educational system. What worked for Rome works for any hierarchical organization. While the intended goal might appear to justify the means, the outcome serves Satan's objective of severing men from their Creator. A believer whose sight has been fixed on another creature as a channel of truth, becomes lulled into a false security. In this state, the impetus to grow is limited to the standard of the teacher. On his own, man cannot begin to comprehend YWVH's perfect standard, to which His Spirit is ever drawing His followers to attain. Therefore, the student in the degree system will never reach a standard higher than those at the top of the hierarchy.

We need only look at the results of the Papal system to recognize that the leadership really wants only to control the unlearned. They don't want a situation where they have too many chiefs and not enough Indians! They establish minimum standards for the many and feed them just enough spiritual food to keep them "alive" enough to support the system, yet hungry enough to keep them coming back.

Please note: The foregoing is aimed at religious training specifically, not toward the practical physical sciences that affect our daily life on this planet. No one wants to waste time and money, to say nothing of risking their investment, by taking their vehicle to an unqualified mechanic. And even more critical, who would call on a local handyman to set a broken bone or even a general practitioner for open heart or brain surgery? To obtain degrees in the physical sciences or even biblical studies is not wrong in and of itself. It is dangerous, and therefore wrong, if it causes us to place ourselves in a position between others and God or causes us to look to the creature rather than our Creator in things pertaining to spiritual life.

Perception of Inability

In the church, there is a growing prevalence of thought that one is not equipped to properly understand spiritual things without, what carnal man considers, a "higher" education. This thinking is closely related to Rome's inverted educational model, in that it is fostered by it. God never said that we must obtain a degree in theology in order to understand or relate to Him! In fact, the Scriptures indicate the opposite. The story of the young Samuel demonstrates this.

I Samuel 2:18 records: "But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod." The Hebrew word translated here as "child" means "a *boy* . . . from the age of infancy to adolescence" according to Strong's Hebrew dictionary. At a time when "the word of the LORD was precious" and "*there* was no open vision," it says "the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli" (1 Samuel 3:1). Because God knew that Samuel had a heart to obey Him, He gave him a prophetic message to relay to Eli. It says, "And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established *to be* a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh; for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD" (I Samuel 3:19-21).

By a prophecy in I Samuel 2:35, the story of Samuel is linked to the Messiah that was to come. Following the pronouncement that Eli's two wicked sons would die in one day, God said, "And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever." No man but the *Man Christ Jesus* could fill this description! Jesus demonstrated, at the young age of twelve, that God does not depend on man's educational system to teach His people. Concerning Jesus as He sat in the temple amidst the doctors of religion, "hearing them, and asking them questions," Luke says, "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:46, 47).

The word “astonished” is used thirteen more times throughout the gospels, describing the reaction of the people to Jesus’ teaching and miracles. Had He not received His understanding and power from His Heavenly Father, He would have been as any other man. That Jesus had not been taught by man’s system of learning is evidenced in John 7:15, “And the Jews marveled, saying, ‘How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?’”

Not one of God’s people needs to feel incapable of understanding and knowing Him just because he or she has not learned from man’s formal educational system. From New Covenant promise to living examples, we can stand assured that The Holy Spirit will teach us all we need to know, just as Jesus said!

Mental Laziness and Tradition

Mental laziness and religious tradition are linked together like congenitally joined twins. They both support and feed off shared misconceptions. Should they be separated, it would be interesting to see if either of them could survive. Mental laziness eagerly accepts what tradition has to offer, because it presents the path of least effort; while tradition needs lazy minds to accept its supposed security in order to keep it in circulation.

When Scripture says “gird up the loins of your mind,”(I Peter 1:13), laziness answers, “Why should I labor my mind with thinking when I can live off the wealth of tradition that has been handed down to me?” (See I Peter 1:18.) From the diagnosis of the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:15-17, we can see that this kind of thinking was plaguing them. It is possible, at least for a time, to feel physically secure, yet feel spiritually insecure; however if one’s spiritual account becomes filled with the counterfeit “wealth” of tradition, that soul falls into greater peril. Therefore the greatest danger to the Laodiceans was not their physical assets but rather a *false* sense of spiritual security. The remedy to their condition was the truth of faith, love, and righteousness, of which Jesus is the only source. He did say, “Buy of me,” didn’t He?

When Jesus and His disciples ignored man-made Jewish rules, tradition objected through frustrated Jewish religious leaders. They asked Jesus, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?” To which Jesus replied, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions?” (Matthew 15:2, 3). This occurrence would not have happened if the Jewish leaders had understood and accepted the new covenant promises which Jesus was there to initiate.

Do we think today that the teachings of men, that have been handed down to us, are somehow more trustworthy than were the traditions held by the Jews? Have we lapsed back into that mental laziness that has caused mankind, all the way back to Eden, to rest in the lies of the serpent? Lies that would suggest that we are intellectual equals with God? How much

grief and peril we can avoid by going directly to Jesus for our instruction and encouraging others to do the same!

> "There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation."
>
> *(Counsel to Writers and Editors, p. 35)*

Fear of Deception

Fear of being deceived is both a precursor and product of all the aforementioned problems and has locked many believers into satanic spiritual bondage. This insidious problem is the poster-child of false security which propagates the idea that all else is dangerous. When a person refuses to listen to or look into a new idea, for fear of being led astray, they give evidence they are already duped and have strayed from truth. In essence, they indicate that they have accepted another creature's belief system without verifying its validity through careful Bible study and prayer.

It is essential that we each build our belief structure through our own investigation. Those that arrive at true doctrine through the proper channels have no fear of being deceived, because they are trusting in God's teaching for their security. The believers at Berea were said to be "more noble" than the Thessalonians "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Some years ago there was a TV sitcom which portrayed the antics of a class of intellectually gifted high school students. One of the bylines played at the beginning of each episode went something like this, "They think they know all of the answers, but they don't realize that they haven't heard all the questions yet!" This is true for one who may be up on all the traditional teachings of the church but has not studied to show oneself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

We will not know all the test questions we will face, let alone their answers, until we have placed ourselves under, and diligently compared our beliefs with, the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Only the beliefs gained from a personal relationship with Him who is called "Truth" (John 14:6), will withstand the trials of investigation! It is that Truth which sets us free from spiritual bondage. (See John 8:32.) If you are walking in fear of being led astray by unfamiliar ideas, please double check your present source of "truth."

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.
(Review and Herald, July 26, 1892)

Chapter Four

Treacherous Tactics

Before we go any further, the tactics used to dissuade believers from investigating the feasts for themselves need to be addressed. Contrary to what it might seem to some, the purpose of this chapter is not to malign the beliefs or motives of anyone; rather, it is that we might recognize how default human behavior can affect our thinking to a negative end. Satan is desperate to distract the attention of God's people from Christ; he appeals to our fallen human nature to justify the use of unethical tactics, because our objectives are religious. Those tactics, when investigated, are often revealed as desperate attempts to control the thinking of others while lacking substantive evidence to support one's claims. We will look at those tactics under their subheadings.

The *One Lump* Tactic

One conference official presented the results of his research at a camp meeting seminar. He listed several sub-groups of feast keepers such as those who feel convicted to wear tassels on their garments or other garb worn by religious Jews, those who observe a lunar Sabbath cycle rather than the weekly cycle, and those who use the Hebrew names in referring to God or other Bible characters. This was presented in such a way that many would conclude that all feast keepers are of, what mainstream Adventism would consider, the radical fringe. It is true that at any feast site where Adventists might attend, there may be those who practice any or all of these beliefs. However, this in no way proves that all feast keepers believe alike; nor does it disprove the validity of God's appointments.

The lumping tactic is unfair to both those being grouped and those upon whom the tactic is being applied. SDA's surely wouldn't appreciate being lumped together with other sabbatarians who hold widely divergent beliefs, such as Neo-Naziism or homosexuality. They know that to dissuade others from investigating the Sabbath's biblical standing based upon the assumption that all Sabbath keepers believe the same, is to rob them of a vital scriptural truth. The same holds true for the feasts.

The *Guilt by Association* Tactic

This tactic is closely related to the *One Lump* tactic. Because feast keeping may be foreign to our cultural and traditional mindset, many Adventists can be easily persuaded that anything in common with ancient Hebrew or orthodox Jewish practice is just too weird to be seriously considered today. The Church of Rome, despising all things Jewish, followed this

same motivation. Thinking "to change times and laws," (Daniel 7:25), she replaced YHVH's annual holy days, in addition to the weekly Sabbath, with supposedly "Christianized" pagan rituals and holidays. (**Note:** "The Catholic Church abolished not only the Sabbath, **but all the other Jewish festivals.**" T. Enright, Bishop of St. Alphonsus Church, St. Louis, Missouri, June, 1905. [Emphasis added.])

Guilt by association does not hold up under scriptural scrutiny. God never said we are to establish our belief and practice upon the basis of what is comfortable to our thinking. Nor did He tell us to abandon truths just because some hold to them who are wrong in other points of doctrine. He did plainly tell us that His ways and thoughts are not anything like ours. (See Isaiah 55:7-9.) This should clue us in to the realization that much of what seems strange to us just might have come from God in the first place. Wouldn't it be prudent to pray and study that we may know what God would have us understand about these things, before we make light of, and dismiss them as unimportant?

The *Scarecrow* Tactic

The purpose of a scarecrow or straw-man is to deceive and/or distract. This is fine when dealing with crows in the cornfield or garden, but these have no place in God's church. This tactic puts undue emphasis on one point of truth which supports one's objective, and purposely remains silent regarding another point of truth which may counter one's objective. This is deceptive.

For instance, this tactic has been blatantly used with I Corinthians 5:7 in an attempt to make the feasts appear fulfilled in Christ and therefore no longer in effect. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" has been quoted as a seminar subtitle, while Paul's next words "therefore let us keep the feast" were not mentioned. This works all too well on many, because they are eager to take the word of another rather than study for themselves.

Feast keepers are accused of skipping through the Bible, picking and choosing only what they want, while the ones that accuse them do just that. If we are practicing hypocrisy, it is useless to hide behind the guise that we have studied all of Scripture to arrive at our conclusions. When we are dealing with Truth, we must remember that Truth either sets us free from our deceptions or exposes them. As God's people, can't we let the Bible state the truth, The Spirit convict the heart, and each individual decide? Let's stop playing mind games, using the devil's tactics to push our agenda! Amen?

The *I've Studied More Than You* Tactic

A myth abounds that has resulted in Christians not checking things out for themselves. This myth is the idea that those who hold degrees in biblical studies can be trusted to explain the

meaning of Scriptures to us and, therefore, we don't need to study to know the meaning for ourselves. This myth is capitalized upon by some who seek, either to control the thinking of others, or promote a cherished view at all cost. Our focus tactic is empowered by this myth. While it is fine to listen to others' interpretations and compare them with what the Spirit is speaking to our heart, we dare not transfer our trust from our Creator to another creature.

This tactic was used in a television interview. The topic was on feast keeping. Both the guest and the host had earned their doctorates. The term "The Good Doctor" was used more than once, and it was stated that the guest had more degrees than a thermometer. An analogy was made of their study to swimming; and the people were encouraged to jump in and not be afraid, for the doctor would not let them drown. Intended or not, the effect of this tactic is that many rest their belief on the conclusions of others. To jump into the water of someone else's study may lead one down a particular stream of thought that may be true in and of itself, but it may fail to give a balanced view of the topic. To trust in a fellow creature to keep us from drowning in *their* pool of spiritual thought can be dreadfully dangerous. Spiritual things are *spiritually* discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14). That trust must be reserved for the Holy Spirit alone.

The apostle Paul warned against those who would use this tactic to induce others to follow them. A possible application of this warning may be missed today because of the way this text is usually translated. Colossians 2:18, 19 read as follows:

> 18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Now, let's look at these verses from a slightly different angle while holding to the meanings of the original Greek words. I will call this a Peterson paraphrase:

> 18 Let no man, vainly inflated by his fleshly intellect, defraud you of your salvation, delighting in (the) humiliated mind and (resulting) worship of messengers/pastors; intruding into those things which he has not clearly discerned, 19 And not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, through the joints and bands, has been and is nourished and united with the growth of God.

Concerning our responsibility, the key phrase in these verses is "Let no man" which relates to verse eight's "Beware lest any man." Concerning the mistake others make by attempting to induce us to follow their thinking, the key word in these verses is "Head." In two preceding verses (Colossians 1:18 & 2:10), Paul identifies the Head as Christ. The spiritual

nourishment that feeds the whole body flows from Him. We dare not stand in the Holy Spirit's place to teach others, nor allow another to do so to us. Rightfully, we can only *share* our understanding with one another; by no means can we save another from drowning in the pool of *our* personally studied conclusions, except we point them to Christ.

Relative to this tactic of pulling scholastic rank on others to gain their allegiance or promote one's belief, is the use of words that should be reserved, in the spiritual sense, for God alone. The words "good" and "doctor" are two such words. Concerning the word "good," Jesus replied to the rich young man that had addressed Him as "Good Master": "Why callest thou me good? *there* is none good but one, *that is*, God . . ." (Matthew 19:17). Regardless of which way we dissect this verse, we cannot get around the fact that Jesus said that God alone

> "Christ foresaw that the undue assumption of authority indulged by the scribes and Pharisees would not cease with the dispersion of the Jews. He had a prophetic view of the work of exalting human authority to rule the conscience, which has been so terrible a curse to the church in all ages. And His fearful denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees, and His warnings to the people not to follow these blind leaders, were placed on record as an admonition to future generations." *(Great Controversy p. 596)*

is spiritually Good. Would it not have been altogether different had the young man addressed Jesus as "good master carpenter" and then followed with a question concerning woodworking?

In like manner, the word "doctor" is offensive to God when it is applied spiritually to a creature. Although the title "doctor" does not appear in the following verses, titles with equivalent meanings do. Speaking of the Jewish scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said:

> "And (scribes and Pharisees) love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:6-12 [words in parentheses supplied]).

When one looks at other places in the New Testament where these titles are used, it becomes obvious that Jesus was speaking in the spiritual sense of their meaning. Rabbi, master, and doctor are synonymous and sometimes rendered from the same Greek words. There is nothing wrong with receiving a doctorate in biblical studies, nor is it presumptuous to bear the title "Bible Teacher." It is when one either gives or accepts adulation as one to be obeyed and trusted in spiritual matters that it is an affront to God. As individuals before God, we may share and learn much from each other; but we are spiritually established only upon the teaching of The Holy Spirit to our hearts. We dare not entrust that honor to any creature, only our Creator! (See II Chronicles 20:20; John 14:26.)

"The oft repeated 'Rabbi,' was very acceptable to the ear, but Jesus warned his disciples against this. . . . By these words Christ meant that no man is to place his spiritual interest under another as a child is guided and directed by his earthly father. This has encouraged a spirit to desire ecclesiastical superiority, which has always resulted in the injury of the men who have been trusted, and addressed as 'Father.' It confuses the sense of the sacredness of the prerogatives of God."
(Manuscript Release 71, 1897)

The *Phantom Fear* Tactic

Instilling fear in others to keep them in a particular religious system has no doubt been used since the first man-made religion. To add the specter of mystery only heightens its effectiveness. At the camp meeting seminar mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the audience was solemnly warned of supposed sophistries used by those in the feast keeping movement. It was stated that, "Once somebody gets sucked into a feast keeping group, it looks like they remain there; they don't seem to leave." They were also told, "They (feast keepers) have been causing all kinds of dissidence" and "Don't try to argue with them." With puzzlement, the speaker described the movement as if there were some kind of mysterious power that captivates those that enter it. Quote, "It appears as though there is something, uh, I don't know what it is, that holds them in the group." The question must be asked, though: Couldn't that be said by others of anyone who follows the Spirit's conviction of a biblical truth not commonly held by the Christian church at large? Would it not be better to encourage all to place themselves in the hands of our Heavenly Father and study to know Truth according to

His teaching? No one needs fear this method of learning. In fact, it erases fear and bonds such students to God, making them immovable.

From the quotes above, it can be concluded that an allusion to cultic practice is being projected upon those who observe the feasts. This invokes fear in the minds of those who know of the brainwashing techniques practiced by some religious cults. No doubt there are those on both sides of the feast-keeping question who use ungodly means in an attempt to control the thinking of others. We all need to stand guard that we do not fall into using such tactics when we share our beliefs with others!

Finally, do we really need to fear the study and sharing of God's Word with any or all who will? There is a reason YHVH placed His feasts in the Bible, and we owe it to ourselves to seek Him, inquiring as to how they might apply in our lives. There is no phantom fear with Him!

Chapter Five

Who Shall Teach Us?
and
Whom Are We to Believe?

These two questions are two of the most important questions any child of YHVH can ask. Since knowing God is the basis of our relationship with Him, our knowledge of Him must be accurate. It would be profitable for each of us to review where we received our concepts of who God is and what He is like, making sure our sources were reliable! Few seem to grasp how critical the surety of this information is. Few seem to know what the Scriptures have to say about our two big questions. In this chapter, we will check the trustworthiness of seven potential sources of information by applying the Bible test. Each subsection will focus on one of these sources. Let's let the Bible reveal which source is to *Teach* and be *Believed!* (Note: It is important the reader understands that we are talking about the bedrock foundation of our relationship with God. We may learn from and be taught temporal information by many different sources, but there is only One that is trustworthy in things pertaining to Eternal Life.)

Human Teachers?

All of us are born into the fallen family of man. From our earliest consciousness, we learn from other humans. This is normal and expected. Therefore, when the Bible speaks of a new *spiritual* birth, it should not seem strange to us that YHVH Himself will teach us the ways of His life. As we have touched on previously concerning the New Covenant, God instructed through Jeremiah:

> And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the LORD": for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD. . . (Jeremiah 31:34).

In I John 2:26-27, the apostle John reiterated this same truth to the early Christians as a safeguard from those who would lead them away from the Truth:

> These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Paul also reasoned this truth in I Corinthians 2:12-14:

> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

As all of the New Testament is rooted in the Old, we find the central principle involved in our topic powerfully established in three Old Testament references:

Psalm 146:

> 3 Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there* is no help.
> 5 Happy is *he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God.

Isaiah 2:

> 17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
> 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

Jeremiah 17:

> 5 Thus saith the LORD, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh His arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."

Isn't the Bible abundantly clear? Do we dare argue with or ignore such counsel?

Religions?

The old saying, "Birds of a feather flock together," can certainly be applied to religions. With large people groups espousing this religion or that, we know they cannot all be right. Many wars have been fought and countless more lives have been lost over religious beliefs. Amidst all the confusion in the world today, the liar in his lair still whispers to those caught up in their flock of choice: "So many can't be wrong!" Even though most would deny that statement to be true regarding various other religions, they fail to question its validity when it comes to their own chosen group or sub-group. I add "sub-group," because not only are there

the various religions but an almost endless list of denominations or sects within them. But then, there is Messiah, the anti-religion!

Here is a good place to make a bold assertion: Religions (including their denominations and/or sects) are of men, but the True Church is of God alone. In spite of the truth mixed into the Samaritan religion, in spite of the greater truth held by the Jews, The Messiah pointed us all to Heaven when He told the Samaritan woman:

> "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24).

> ". . . God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' (Matthew 18:20) Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church."
> *(E.G White, Letter 108, Oct. 28, 1886)*

Here we all are called out of the religions of man to a *spiritual* walk of life. And not just any spirit, but The Spirit and The Truth of YHVH Himself. Need any more be said about religions?

Ministers?

Ephesians 4:11 lists the offices that make up the ministry of God's church. There are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. All those holding these offices can be called ministers. Paul attributes these gifts as given by Messiah. This being the case, many believers trust human ministers with their eternal life, thereby putting their souls at risk of deception and destruction.

A vicarious "relationship with God" through another human isn't a relationship at all. Rather, it is a sick counterfeit through which Satan can brainwash the believer. This misplaced trust need not be, and there would be far less of it if everyone understood that false ministers abound and that trusting a creature in the spiritual sense is unscriptural. Paul exposes the selfish motivation of those impostors who take glory in others following after them while actually preaching a different gospel. Let's read his scathing denunciation in II Corinthians 11:

> "They (many) see that the truth for this time is plainly brought to view in the Bible, and they feel the power of the Holy Spirit attending its proclamation; yet they allow the opposition of the clergy to turn them from the light."
> *(Great Controversy p. 597)*

> 13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.
> 14 And no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
> 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

No matter how much we might pride ourselves in being a good judge of character, that pride also will precede a fall - our own. The fact is, we cannot out-think Satan! We are safe only in a one-to-One spiritual relationship with our Creator, with no creature interference.

Prophets?

Even though prophets are included under ministers in Ephesians 4, the office deserves a place in this chapter's listing. Many assume that, because God sent His miracle working prophets, those who call themselves prophets and work miracles (or "magic") today can be trusted. A simple reminder that all prophets are human should be enough, but many need more. Perhaps the story in I Kings 13 will suffice. Please read it for yourself if you are unacquainted with it. For our purpose here, two verses from this chapter make the point very nicely:

> 11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; . . .
> 18 He said unto him, "I *am* a prophet also as thou *art*; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD. . . *But* he lied unto him."

The angelic prophet that came to the apostle John while he was on the Isle of Patmos forbade John from worshiping him because, as he put it: "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy

brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). Angel prophets are still creatures and should not be worshiped (or trusted in the ultimate sense).

Angels?

What if you were awakened from a sound sleep by a dazzlingly brilliant being; would you be safe in assuming this must be a messenger from heaven? By now, I hope, your answer would be a resounding "No!" After reading the verses we have reviewed in this chapter, we should clearly understand that hasty decisions to trust anyone other than God can be dangerous if not deadly.

Paul, in warning the Galatians that others were preaching a false gospel to them, staked his claim to the true gospel with: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). If we think about that statement for a moment, we might well ask, "Who does Paul think he is? Is he more trustworthy than an angel from Heaven?" But when we remember that Satan is an angel that was in Heaven but is now going around spreading his perverted gospel lies, we start to get the point about angels. As for Paul, he included himself and his fellows, didn't he? He also tells us where he got his gospel (Galatians 1:1, 11, 12); and if we read between the lines we can hear him say, "Don't take my word for it! Check it out with my source for yourself. Did not Jesus promise that the Spirit would teach us all things?" Well, so much for angels (and apostles).

Ourselves?

We are down to our sixth sub-section. Surely we can trust ourselves to tell the truth to ourselves, right? Sadly, the answer is no. Not that we would intentionally lie to ourselves or others but rather we are incapable, in and of ourselves, of perceiving truth. We are too quick to rest our belief in our own thinking and conclusions. What was it that God told Isaiah, recorded in Isaiah 55:6-9? Let's look at that again!

> 6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:
> 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
> 8 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
> 9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Paul proclaimed: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned” (I Corinthians 2:14). It is no wonder Jesus told those Jews who, though proud of their knowledge of Scripture, were yet seeking to destroy Him: “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life” (John 5:39, 40).

One truth which undergirds the principles we are reviewing in this chapter is the fact that all things spoken or written are subject to interpretation. If you would like to test that thesis, ask ten people to read a small excerpt from any publication and relate to you what they think it means. It is highly probable you will receive ten different meanings or variations. The fact that each of us are individuals with unique backgrounds and experiences sets the stage for our often unique, private interpretation of what we see and hear. This is most likely the underlying reason for the disagreements we have, even within our “birds of a feather” congregations. Little wonder there are so many religions and denominations!

Thanks be to YHVH! He has provided us an escape from our constant arguing over our different opinions. II Peter 1:20, 21 applies a principle to understanding prophecy that works just as well with all Scripture:

> 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.
> 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as *they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

This redeeming principle is that Father God has made *His* interpretation free and available to all who will receive it through the New Covenant sacrifice of His Son. The same Spirit that inspired The Scriptures is available to interpret them for each of us. Only God’s interpretation can bring true unity to His church. Why not just trust Him in the first place?

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil (Proverbs 3:5-7).

GOD!

In this, our last source of information under discussion, it will suffice to let the Bible speak for itself with little commentary. The following verses either directly state, or support the vital concept that God alone is to *Teach* us in the ultimate spiritual sense:

Isaiah 54:

> 13 And all thy children *shall* be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Jeremiah 31:

> 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

John 6:

> 45 (Jesus said) It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. (Words in parentheses added.)

John 14:

> 26 But the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Romans 3:

> 4 . . . (L)et God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

II Chronicles 20:

> 20 . . . Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established*; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.

Concluding Chapter Five

So that none will put this little book down saying, “Evidently this guy doesn’t believe in the Bible. Evidently he feels we cannot trust what is written there; because it was written by

men and even sometimes brought to the writers by angels, both of which are creatures and not the Creator." I will state again: The teaching referred to is that extremely important Teaching (with a capital T) that establishes us in covenant relationship with YHVH; the Teaching that we can stand before Him in the judgment, believing without any doubts; the Teaching for which we are willing to go to our death rather than recant; the Teaching that can only come directly from Him!

*Strong's #H539 – morally to *be true* or certain – Please note: We are not *established* on man's word, only God's.

Chapter Six

Feast Keeping - The Marriage Covenant Connection

Throughout Scripture, YHVH uses romantic marriage language to describe His plan of salvation for mankind. Sometimes His words are plain and direct, other times allusive. Those of us who have not grown up in an eastern or Hebrew culture often fail to perceive Scriptural references to marriage customs. Without the realization that God is romantically pursuing a bride in His covenant overtures, we can legalistically isolate ourselves from the drawing power inherent in His love. The knowledge that the New Covenant is part of a heart-warming marriage proposal, and not just some cold legal document, can make all the difference in the world! This is especially true when we know that our Suitor is all-powerful, all-wise, owns everything, and the ultimate definition of love!

As touched on in chapter one, that which God desires for those created in His image is that they come to intimately *know* Him spiritually. Could this not be the reason that He created the sexual marriage bond, to help us understand the spiritual relationship with us that He desires? The consummation of an earthly marriage takes place when the husband *enters* his wife. So in the Heavenly marriage, we are not spiritually married to Jesus until His Spirit *enters* our heart/mind - until He knows us and we *know* Him.

> Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them,
> I never **knew** you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
> Matthew 7:21-23 (Emphasis added.)
>
> (Note: The Greek word translated here as "iniquity" is *anomia*, meaning "illegality" which comes from anomos which means "lawless" according to *Strong's Greek Dictionary*.)

This Spiritual bond is often referred to as a "saving relationship," as truly it is! What is often neglected or misunderstood, though, is the marriage contract (God's Law/Torah), to which we

must agree before this union can occur. Because YHVH wants us to really know or understand who He is, He made sure to give us ample revelation of His character through His law. If we didn't like the sound of His law, we wouldn't want to live with Him forever, would we? His law, then, is an integral part of His covenant or marriage contract. Of course, He never forces our will. He wants a bride who loves and chooses Him for who He is and, therefore, accepts His proposal.

Misdirected Motives

There is another class of "believers" prefigured in a short but potent end-time prophecy in Isaiah 4:1. This is set in a larger prophecy in chapter 3, of what would happen to Israel if they persisted in their rebellion against God. Verse 25 warns, "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war." This sets the stage for our prophecy in that there would be a shortage of husbands for the women. Isaiah 4:1 reads:

> And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

To apply this prophecy to our day, all we need to do is replace the terms used with their prophetic meanings; and we have a sobering picture of the current crisis. First let's review the terms and their prophetic counterparts.

- The number seven = completeness or all
- Women = churches
- The one man in scripture = Jesus
- Bread = doctrine or belief
- Apparel = righteousness

Now let's see what it is saying to us in these last days:

> And in that day all churches shall take hold of Jesus, saying, "We will provide our own beliefs, and be covered by our own righteousness; only let us be called Christian, to take away our reproach."

We can see this happening all around us, can't we? Revelation 18:7, speaking of "Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots," reveals: ". . . (F)or she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Although she claims to be the wife of Jesus, The Queen of Heaven, she is actually just the mistress of the devil. The serpent perpetuates his lie from Eden that man is equal with God in his own right and, therefore, needs pay no attention to His words.

Just To Be Near You!"

It is easy to tell when two people are in love. They get as close to each other as they can. They spend every possible moment together. When they are apart, they constantly speak about the one they love to others, revealing where their thoughts are focused. YHVH made us this way, because He is this way. He has always made the first move to be close to us. The first mention of God's actions after creating Adam and Eve has Him walking in the garden, calling unto Adam, "Where art thou?" (Genesis 3:8, 9). Later, after sealing His marriage covenant with Israel, God told Moses, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). Just prior to ratifying the New/Marriage Covenant with His church/bride, Jesus passionately prayed to His Father, ". . . I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am . . ." (John 17:24). Let us not pass lightly over these indications of God's desire for us to be close to Him!

Let's imagine we are listening to a story about a couple engaged to be married. In this story, the fiancé has to be away on business for an extended period of time; he can only see his fiancée on certain appointed times, at a certain place. He has made full provision for her to meet him on these occasions and spend a day or two with him before returning to his business. Having heard this much of the story, what would you expect of this woman, as to when (or even whether) she showed up to meet her fiancé? Isn't it a given that we would expect her to show up at the appointed time and place for each meeting? What if she does not show up? Wouldn't this cause us to question her love for him? Is there any difference between this story and our spiritual relationship with our Betrothed?

The above story, with its questions, takes on greater significance for us when we come to understand that the word "feasts" in Leviticus 23:2 is translated from the Hebrew word *mowed* which means "prop. an *appointment*, i.e. a fixed *time* or season." (See Strong's H4150.) When we claim to be God's people/church, we place ourselves into covenantal relationship with Him and therefore under the stipulations of His covenant. Those stipulations include His appointed times to meet with us. The first one mentioned in Leviticus 23 is the seventh-day Sabbath, followed by the annual feasts "in their seasons" (Leviticus 23:4). We need to be careful that we do not indict ourselves by the way we judge the fiancée in our story. Jesus' marriage contract (His Torah law) stipulates His expectations of how we are to respond to Him. Our response reveals the true condition of our heart. He did say, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," didn't He?

Following first century Hebrew wedding custom, the suitor presented a marriage contract to the father of the girl he desired to marry. If the father and his daughter found the man and his contract suitable, the man and his bride-to-be would sign the contract. After this,

the groom would go back to his father's house and prepare the wedding chamber in which they would consummate their marriage. The bride would await his return to take her back home to the wedding celebration. Jesus signed the New Covenant/marriage contract with His own blood. Upon leaving for His Father's house, He used language in keeping with the Jewish wedding custom. He said, ". . .I go to prepare a place for you. . . . and I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). By sending His Spirit, He made full provision for us to show our love and dedication to Him by preparing for His soon return. How will we respond? The choice is ours!

Forsaken or Forgotten?

Oh Israel, Israel my betrothed,
Care ye not that I love thee?
I alone can give you life.
I alone can set you free.

With open arms to thee I've beckoned,
With words of kindness entreated you;
How my heart yearns for your presence,
At our awaited rendezvous!

Have I not sent thee invitations,
With words of crimson edged in gold?
Have I not sent thee priest and prophet,
To show the way from days of old?

Right on time I shed my blood,
To seal our sacred marriage bond.
I left with promise to return,
To take you home midst angel's song.

In ten days I sent my Spirit,
To prepare you for that glorious day;
But my appointments you've not kept;
Do I fear right you've lost your way?

Tell me please that it is so,
And not some other's love you seek.
If you've left me for another,
How my aching heart will break!

Oh Israel, Israel my beloved,
Tell me, what more can I do?
Breathless, I await your answer,
At our lover's rendezvous!

Your Husband, Y'shua

Chapter Seven

Final Comments for "Feast Keeping Opposition and the Current Crisis" by Charlene Fortsch

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Events That Inspire Us to Move Forward

Any one of us that have removed ourselves from many of the traditions of the Roman system know that we've had "many lessons to learn, and many, many lessons to unlearn." When looking back on my life I have found that it was easier learning the new lessons, even though there was a serious investment of time. But what are those lessons that have to be unlearned – in fact maybe twice as many lessons to unlearn? How do we ever search out in our own lives, (through Yahuah's Covenant in Torah), for what we actually have to examine closely and completely discard? This is not an easy task for it requires a lot of soul searching and also some good Scripture study skills to get started. Why? Because it is not always safe to trust pastors, leaders, or other writers with many scholastic degrees – along with recognition from local conferences and denominations. Extensive education degrees are no guarantee that anyone can be sure they have the truth. Everyone has some Scripture study skills, but the next concern might be: "I don't have good enough Scripture study skills. What am I supposed to do next?" After reading this booklet are you inspired that YHVH wants you to move further in your journey? Well dear Reader, we are glad you asked, as the information that many of us have been missing out on for far too long is part of that "unlearning" process. However, once an error is "unlearned" does it not need to be replaced with the truth?

My conclusion to this book will contain information for a new lesson of learning – you will be breaking up your own fallow ground. If the ground in your heart is of good soil, you will gladly begin your search towards the next milestone of your journey. The booklet has already laid out many reasons why the truth of Yahuah's feasts are rejected, but these issues do not need to stay this way. In this conclusion, you will decide your next step – using your own abilities, and your strengths along with logic and common sense – all gifts from YHVH.

You see, YHVH is the Bridegroom of His people that are committed to following Him according to **ALL** the instructions He gave to everyone that would receive them. While every one of us should know ALL of the instructions are very important, there always seems to be a

few of these instructions that receive a harsher treatment. What could those be? Well, in a nutshell, it is the worship statutes that seem to have many varied interpretations. While many of us believe, know, understand and accept the Saturday Sabbath as the true worship day of the week, we also know this:

1. Many believe Sunday is the correct worship day;
2. Some believe the Sabbath day is Friday;
3. Some are even following various moon phases to determine the weekly Sabbath – which can land on any day of the week for a full month at a time.

Those that do honor the [Saturday] Sabbath long to share the truth of the true Sabbath with others, as you well know. However, this writing has already shown there can be incredible resistance for many reasons. Nevertheless, we still know that YHVH is searching for His Bride that longs to be in a full covenant relationship with Him, and follow all of His instructions – especially every one of the worship statutes.

There are many [Saturday] Sabbath keepers around the world today. However most of them do not understand (or know yet) that there are more worship statutes besides the weekly Sabbath. Yes indeed, YHVH has other appointed times that have been carefully outlined in the Torah. In fact they are so carefully outlined of when to join Him in communion and fellowship that **His people** have a safeguard to never be lured into celebrating any of the pagan holidays, such as Easter and Christmas. These "other worship statutes," in Torah, are also known as YHVH's memorials, or annual appointed times, or the Feasts and Festivals. These statutes were set up from the beginning of time for anyone that desired to be in a full covenant relationship with the Creator. These statutes were never meant to be for "only the Jews." All through the Scriptures, these appointed times are known as YHVH's appointed times and because we know YHVH does not change – we know and believe that His Royal Law cannot change either – not even at the cross.

Yet we hear the Sunday preachers say the Sabbath was done away with at the cross, being changed to Sunday. They decided Sunday is to be kept in honor of the resurrection. Sabbath keepers that have done a proper study of the Scriptures and secular history know that the Sunday pastors still have a few more things "to unlearn" – if they are willing.

While we desire to see these changes in our Sunday-keeping friends, it doesn't take long to realize the same issue is happening within many [Sat.] Sabbath-keeping churches. They would never give up their weekly Sabbath, but at the same time many are taught the annual Sabbaths "were nailed to the cross." And sadly, many believe what they hear, and search no further. The reasons for this tragedy have already been given in this booklet. Few of us would want to be in the same category as Rome by exchanging precious truths for errors of

paganism. Daniel 7:25 [KJV] is a perfect example to search out for a start on this topic. It's very easy to check the Aramaic word for "times" in verse 25 to find it is transliterated as "zeman." An exhaustive concordance will tell you the definition is: a set time, time or appointed period. However it is very interesting that many other revisions and translations of Daniel 7:25 actually have more accurate wording for "times/zeman" such as the English words: feast days, sacred festivals, and sacred seasons instead of the vague word of "times." Check out some other Scripture translations to see how easy it is to understand what Papal Rome accomplished in Daniel 7:25.

Then there are others that say the Feasts and Festivals have been fulfilled and they don't need to be honored anymore. Yes, it sounds good, as that is what many have been taught for decades. It's interesting that many have not realized exactly what Yahusha "said and meant" when He celebrated that Last Supper with His disciples. The passage in Luke 22 documents very clearly that Yahusha will not participate in the Passover again "until it is fulfilled" in the kingdom. In fact Yahusha did say, "With desire **I have desired** to eat this Passover with you … [but] I will **not eat** … I will **not drink** … **until** the kingdom of YHVH will come." And then He said to keep honoring Passover in remembrance of Him. In other words, "Keep doing the Passover festival."

Luke 22:

> 14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.
> 15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:
> 16 For I say unto you, **I will not any more eat thereof**, **until** it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.
> 17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:
> 18 For I say unto you, **I will not drink of the fruit of the vine**, **until** the kingdom of God shall come.
> 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.
> 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

There are many passages that confirm YHVH's appointed times will be observed by His Bride in the new heaven and new earth, and the kingdom of YHVH year after year. In the case of Passover, this festival will be filled full of meaning in that great Kingdom. Because YHVH does not change (Mal 3:6) all of His worship statutes will be perfectly restored as they were in

the beginning (Isa 46:9-10). That includes the weekly Sabbath along with the Feast and Festival worship statutes. These will always be memorials of His plan of salvation for eternity. Maybe you don't know what these Feasts and Festivals are, or how to find them. In general there are 7 Festivals, and there are also 7 Feast Sabbaths. (Note: Passover and Wavesheaf are not Feast Sabbaths.) Following is a short outline:

1. Spring Festivals: Passover; Unleavened Bread Festival (2 Feast Sabbaths); Wavesheaf
2. Early Summer Festival: Pentecost (Feast Sabbath)
3. Fall Festivals: Feast of Trumpets (Feast Sabbath); Day of Atonement (most solemn Feast Sabbath of the year); Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day (includes 2 Feast Sabbaths)

   These festivals "stand together" each year teaching the whole plan of salvation. No wonder we will observe all these worship statutes with Yahuah forever.

Maybe you are wondering about the implication of learning more about this part of the plan of salvation for eternity – through these annual festivals. Today many are searching to understand the Plan of Salvation through the seven annual festivals, though they may see only dimly right now. It's part of "learning many new lessons" and at the same time there will be "many, many lessons to unlearn." Truly, there is more "light" to be restored before the end of time.

"Do we really *have to*?"

Just think - how many times have you heard this statement from the majority of "so-called Christians," or maybe even uttered it yourself? … "We don't have to keep those Jewish feasts of the Old Testament to be saved." Are these people really saying these appointed times are a burden, which they do not have to keep to be given eternal life with YHVH? Reader, what you just read is a true statement! We are not saved by keeping the feast worship statutes. However, keeping the weekly Sabbath does not guarantee our salvation either. Salvation is only through the blood spilled on your Messiah's Passover day. Keep in mind there is another true statement to contemplate and that is: we are to remember and honor **all** of the worship statutes according to the way YHVH instructed us. **These worship times are for the Bride to strengthen her relationship with her Messiah – the Bridegroom**. Through this intimate relationship each will be committed to their Bridegroom forever, because they really know Him through meeting Him at **every divine appointment** including the Feasts and Festivals.

Without having the opportunity to study the full spectrum of the Feasts and Festivals yet, can you see there is a huge conflict between what the Scriptures teach and the attitude and statements of these "well-meaning" Christians that do away with YHVH's feasts? Yes,

they claim and desire to be part of YHVH's future appointed times, yet at the same time despise the Feast and Festival worship statutes, even labelling them as "burdensome." We must question: **"Would the Bride of Yahusha really detest the Bridegroom's worship statutes and then claim she really wants to be part of this marriage for eternity?"** What is the Bridegroom supposed to think of that? What do you think the Bridegroom should do to show His Bride that He is very serious about these special appointments that were designed for His people to have time to commune together with Him? It's a serious question to be considered.

Remember the illustration in chapter 6 of the bridegroom who was required to be away on business? He could only schedule periodic appointments with his bride so they could have special times together before marriage, and he hoped she would be there. But, what if she could not meet her Bridegroom because:

1. She had other priorities
2. The appointed time was just not right for her – it was a burden
3. She had no problems spending other appointed days with other men
4. And she even took pleasure in accepting invitations from other men to enjoy their appointed times given in honor of "other people"
5. In fact it seemed that this Bride repeatedly rejected the invitations from her own Bridegroom to spend special times with him.
6. Question: With all of these excuses of "I cannot come" would you expect she should be married to him?
7. Certainly NOT!

This illustration clearly shows a severe "conflict of interest" in the thinking of most average Christians. How true it is that **the truth is clearly evident by our actions more than by our words**. Surely there has to be a way for those choosing to follow YHVH to "know for sure" if these Feasts and Festivals are indeed still valid instructions for us today?! Yes there is!

The Gift of Love

Salvation is a free gift from Yahusha, period! In fact the name "Yahusha" means "salvation." The requirement is to believe and have faith in Him as our Saviour, the Messiah. Salvation is never given through the requirement of "works" like "keeping a Sabbath day." This gift of salvation is totally based on His LOVE for us. All He asks is for us to love Him with a full desire to follow ALL of His commands that are meant to bless us in many different ways. But, the major blessing is one of an intimate covenant relationship – to really KNOW who He is and to have a desire to follow Him in everything. That is why Yahusha gave us these words in John.

John 14:

> 15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.
> 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.
> 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.
> 22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?
> 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
> 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

So **when**, (not IF), we love Yahusha, we will obey and honor **all** of His sayings, teachings, and commandments, right? Some Christians believe this is limited only to the Ten Commandments, however, when/if you will study carefully you will learn that Exodus 19 – Exodus 24:11 includes more. (We will address this soon.)

Look at Matthew 5:17-20:

> 17 **Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets**: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
> 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but **whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven**.
> 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

So once again, if we love Him, we will obey all of His commandments, and His sayings. In other words, His teachings include more than just the Ten Commandments (which is what most have **not** been taught). In fact, when you find some time, please go back and carefully read in Exodus when the law was given at Mount Sinai; that YHVH was giving all of the law of the covenant from the mountain top. Notice in Exodus 20:18-21, the people closed their ears to YHVH's words after the first ten commands were spoken, declaring they could not bear "the

method of delivery" any more. (Imagine that!) Do you remember **they told Moses** (instead of asking), to go to the top of Mount Sinai **to receive the rest of the law that YHVH planned to speak to them? Then Moses could bring the rest of the words to them later just as he did many times in Exodus 19! The people wanted the rest of the Covenant delivered through Moses, indirectly, rather than, directly, from YHVH as He had planned!** It was never intended that there should be a wall of separation between the first Ten Commandments and the rest of the commands named as "**statutes and judgments**." The everlasting Covenant Law was meant to be delivered all together as one package, but the people stopped the giving of the Covenant Law coming directly from YHVH. Soon you will want to carefully read Exodus chapters 19 to 24. It's an old, old story that is so important today!

The rest of YHVH's everlasting Covenant Laws were then dictated by YHVH to Moses at the top of Mount Sinai. This dictation to Moses begins at Exodus 20:22 all the way to the end of Exodus 23. All of these dictated words (along with the 10 Commandments) will be written in the Book of the Covenant and ratified as everlasting by being sprinkled with blood in Exodus 24.

As you read, did you notice the words of Exodus 23:10-17 where YHVH commands Moses to record the appointed worship statutes – also known today as the feasts and festivals? Did you notice the statute of the weekly Sabbath is in the heart of these worship statutes? Would it make a difference to you to find out in Exodus, that all of these statutes and judgments from Exodus 20 to Exodus 23:33 are also written on the tables of stone to be kept forever? (See Exodus 32:15.)

Now that you have a glimpse of the eternal significance of these worship statutes, do you want to be in full obedience and covenant relationship with your Messiah and Bridegroom? If so, let's read the next best part of this everlasting covenant. Note in Exodus 24:3-8 the entire Book of the Covenant was ratified with blood as one big package, ***before*** *the covenant laws were written on the tables of stone*, which occurred on Moses' **next trip** back up the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights. It is also important to note the people had agreed to accept the invitation to come into everlasting covenant with Yahuah on three occasions.

1. The first time is found in Exodus 19:8 when the people accepted to enter into this covenant relationship, even though they did not know (at this time), what instructions the covenant contained. They simply trusted YHVH to be the best Leader for them.
2. The second time is found in Exodus 24:3. Moses had just returned from the top of Mount Sinai, and **told** the people all the words of the rest of YHVH's Covenant as the people had asked him to do in Exodus 20:19. Moses then wrote all of the covenant

words (also including the Ten Commandments) into a book called the Book of the Covenant.

3. The third acceptance of the people is found in Exodus 24:7 where this time the people **<u>also</u>** **<u>promised</u>** they would be obedient. It is now time to read the best part of this old, old story.

Exodus 24:

> 3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.
> 4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.
> 5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD.
> 6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.
> 7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, **All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.**
> 8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

Most of us were taught (or still believe) the whole law was contained in the Ten Commandments. What are we supposed to do with these statutes and judgments from Exodus 20:22 to the end of Exodus 23? How do we understand these "divisions" are part of the whole law?

Well, that is a good question. The Ten Commandments could be considered as chapter headings, or category titles in the Book of the Covenant, in which the Covenant Laws are spelled out in general detail. However, do not **forget the statutes and judgments that followed the Ten Commandments were the basic principles given to guard everyday life and to specifically guard the Ten Commandments.** These statutes and judgments are like the chapter contents, giving more detail for our understanding. Most of us have never been taught this truth. (Please give careful regard to the Review & Herald quote of May 6, 1875, para. 10 which will be given soon.) After Exodus there are many more details given in the rest of the Torah to further explain specific instructions, such as: Leviticus 11 gives details about "eating clean;" Leviticus 23 has details of exactly when to celebrate all of the weekly and

annual worship statutes. (Do notice the weekly Sabbath is called "a feast" right at the beginning of Leviticus 23, and is included as "binding" with the following feasts and festivals.) We need to understand the Ten Commandments are "Law" and the statutes and judgments can be understood as "by-laws," (or the finer print of the Covenant Laws). All are part of the everlasting Royal Law.

Here is another way to look at these laws. Just as the Ten Commandment law is spelled out in general details, in a similar fashion all of the law is summed up in the two greatest commandments, neither of which is directly commanded in the Ten Commandments. (See Matthew 22:35-40.)

Then all of the Royal Law could be summed up in one word – LOVE (1 John 4:7-12).

So, love for Yahusha our Messiah is what is to motivate us to honor ALL of His teachings and commandments, (noted as laws, statutes, judgments, precepts and ordinances). The Holy Spirit teaches us these things by writing them on our hearts and foreheads (when we joyfully accept them), empowering us by giving us the love we need to do good, following Him and allowing YHVH to cut away our sinful nature. We are then dead to our old fleshly ways being alive to the Holy Spirit's guiding. Then our right thinking and right actions are done in love. Not because we *"**have to**,"* but because it is the desire of our heart to *"**want to**"* along with the desire to come into a very close covenant relationship with our Beloved and His Royal Law.

There is another new lesson for us to learn. That is – we can change our vocabulary and stop using words like:

- *have to,*
- *must,*
- *obligated to, and*
- *required to*.

Instead, let us use language like:

- *want to,*
- *desire,*
- *get the opportunity to,*
- *love to, and*
- *have the joy of*.

This change in our language also expresses the change in our heart condition. Now the motivation for our obedience is because we *"**want to**"* be in a loving covenant relationship. This is the exact opposite of the legalistic mindset of *"**you have to, or else**"!*

Hopefully by now, you understand a bit more about these very important principles of exactly what is contained in all of the laws of the everlasting covenant. If so, then the following quote from Ellen G White in 1875 will have a whole different meaning than ever before. Read it carefully for this paragraph has very deep meaning about the Moral Law (or Royal Law).

- "In consequence of continual transgression, the moral law was repeated in awful grandeur from Sinai. Christ gave to Moses religious precepts which were to govern the everyday life. **These statutes** were explicitly given **to guard** the Ten Commandments. They were **not shadowy types to pass away** with the death of Christ. They were to be **binding upon man in every age as long as time should last**. These commands were enforced by the power of the moral law, and they clearly and definitely **explained that law**." *(Review and Herald, May 6, 1875 par. 10)*

  The weekly Sabbath and the Feast and Festival Sabbaths are all worship statutes. Would all of these also be considered "divine institutions"? If so, consider this quote:
- "In the time of the end every divine institution is **to be** restored."
  (Prophets and Kings [1916], p 678)
  - The weekly Sabbath is a divine institution that has been restored from the pagan Sunday.
  - The annual Sabbaths are also divine institutions that are currently being restored from the pagan festivals handed down to the masses by pagan Papal Rome.
  - Around the world today, groups of feast keepers are being raised up everywhere because many people now understand the Feasts and Festivals are part of the Everlasting Covenant, ratified with blood, to be honored forever.

"Binding" "Salvational" "Legalism" versus the "Love Relationship"

(Please consider this excellent illustration from Ken Wyss.)

"Imagine when you were younger, getting a call from your earthly father, who lived some distance away who says: "Son (or Daughter), I really miss you and want to spend some time with you soon. I have arranged to have some of the family over for the upcoming holiday weekend. I would love to see you, too, if you can come visit during that time. Would you try to come see me?"

"You reply: "Well Dad, thank you for inviting me, but I would first like to know if this is **binding** in our relationship. Or, will I still get my inheritance from you even if I decide not to

come visit you? Because if this is the case, I have other things I would rather do. But, if you say that it is **binding**, then I will make room in my schedule and come see you."

"Applying this illustration to our relationship with our Father in Heaven, we can see how the words **binding** and **salvational** automatically require our human minds to view His requests through the glasses of legalism. We try to determine if each item is something we must do, attempting to establish the minimal list of things that we have to do to get into heaven. If it is not on the list, then we don't want to waste our time with it. [Often] acts of love and service for our LORD and Savior are viewed as burdens, and we want to trim the list to include only the *mandatory* burdens to get the reward of Heaven.

"Let us try on the glasses of love and review our motives for obeying God. Do we seek him, desiring a **love relationship**? Do we want to draw ever closer to Him? Does He bring joy to our hearts? Is it *Him* we seek, or the gold and riches of heaven?"

First Covenant (Blood-ratified & Everlasting):
Written in the Book of the Covenant

The subject of YHVH's Holy Days, (the weekly and annual appointed times of our Creator and Savior), really deserve a fair investigation. Keep praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit, set aside everything that you have learned or been told about the subject. If you do not know how to study out this topic, please ask us for some direction. The best place to start on this particular topic is to just read the story in Exodus from chapter 19 to Exodus 24:11. These are the words that will show you what "laws" are blood ratified and Everlasting Covenant – then written in the Book of the Covenant. With a little further study on "this story" you will find **ALL** the words of the Book of the Covenant were written on two tablets of stone by YHVH's finger (Exodus 32:15). When the wilderness tabernacle was raised up in the second year of the wilderness, both the tablets of stone and the Book of the Covenant were placed **inside** the Ark of the Covenant.

Second Covenant (not Blood-ratified & Temporary):
(Both Covenants Written in the Book of the Law – Gen to Deut)

You may remember there was a "book" placed on the **outside** of the Ark of the Covenant. Yes, indeed there was – named the **Book of the Law**. This book includes the words of the full Torah from Gen to Deut. That means this book also includes another "set of laws" that were also to be honored and kept – the first introduction to these laws is found in Exo 25 to the end of Exo 31. However, these laws were **temporary**. Upon the death of our Saviour, these laws were no longer necessary, nor valid. You can read about **these laws** in Exodus 25-31 that **fall into two basic categories**: 1) The Aaronic Priesthood (ending at the cross, as Yahusha is now our High Melchizedek Priest); 2) The Sanctuary (remember the veil was torn

in two from top to bottom at the death of Yahusha). There was no further reason to have an earthly priesthood functioning within an earthly sanctuary – as now our High Priest functions in His Heavenly Sanctuary on our behalf. Friend, it is good news to know exactly "what was nailed to the cross" on this most important day in history! This includes **ONLY** the temporary laws of the earthly Aaronic priesthood and the earthly tabernacle which were both finished at Yahusha's death, as well as the sacrifices/offerings. Why? There was no more need for them. **Finally, the laws of this temporary covenant had expired.** The rest of the words relating to the Everlasting Covenant (Gen to Deut) still stand. With the temporary laws now being expired, we have a New Covenant that is ratified with "the better blood" of our Messiah.

As this topic is studied out in its fullness, it becomes very evident just how important (and serious) it is to understand what is contained in the Royal Law. This Law was so important that many blessings were given for keeping it. However, things were different for the temporary covenant laws that ended with the death of Yahusha. If those "temporary" [covenant] laws were not kept (along with their related temporary "statutes and judgments"), there were also curses that would come upon the people. (See Deut 28-29 for a list of the blessings and curses and note the list of curses is about three times longer when in disobedience to the "temporary covenant" found in the full Book of the Law.)

Jeremiah 11:2-4

2. **Hear ye the words of this covenant**, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
3. And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,
4. **Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt**, from the iron furnace, **saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God**.

In conclusion, there are still many new lessons to learn. One of these lessons happens to be the truths about ALL the worship statutes that must be restored before the end of time. YHVH is searching for a people that will come into full covenant relationship with Him, meeting Him at every divine appointment. He knows what is best for us. That is why YHVH outlined His perfect plan for His Bride.

It just may be that after you recover from learning how deceived all of us have been into rejecting these everlasting statutes, you too will be drawn closer to YHVH. Your relationship and understanding, along with your joy and love for Him, will increase. When you choose to take the time to rest and be close to YHVH on every one of His holy appointed times, both

weekly and annual, you will experience the transformations and blessings of His love and a deeper relationship with Him. That's a promise!

When we acknowledge how much YHVH has loved us and done for us from the beginning, how He is drawing us closer to Himself even now, and we respond to Him motivated by His love - then meeting YHVH on those appointed times He has set apart has nothing to do with **legalism** and everything to do with our **love relationship** with Him.

For you see, in an everlasting covenant agreement, both parties have their individual responsibility.

1. YHVH took care of His part of the covenant agreement. He shed His blood to provide the door to salvation.
2. Now YHVH's people must find the original Covenant agreement; accept and commit to their part of the Covenant agreement, which is: to keep and honor all of the Covenant instructions – to build a closer relationship and really know "THE" Bridegroom in full Covenant.
3. The final step is **The Wedding of all Weddings** of the universe – and The Wedding Supper with our Messiah.

There is nothing legalistic about having a closer relationship with the Majesty of heaven when following all of the worship statutes – both (1) the weekly Sabbath Feast and (2) the annual Feasts and Festivals.

It is now time to separate from Babylon and all pagan worship statutes!

"Come and See" why so many are awakening to the understanding of "why and how" the Feasts and Festivals are still valid.

"Come and See" why so many people are leaving their churches and denominations today to join ministries that are honoring Torah's Feasts and Festivals!

Come and find out how to be in total Covenant relationship with Yahusha as His Bride!

Blessings and Shalom!

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and

took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." But the wise answered, saying "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But he answered and said, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 25:1-13